

# FACT SHEET: What it means to be a District Supervisor

## ➤ **Background**

Not too long ago, being a district supervisor seemed simple: it was perceived as a voluntary position, didn't take too long, and oversight of district operations was relatively easy. Now, however, the work has become complicated: districts deal with many more dollars, more public scrutiny, and more responsibility. The supervisor's role has shifted from being a volunteer to that of a public official. As times change, districts and their supervisors must also change to remain effective.

## ➤ **Regular Time Commitment**

- Monthly board meetings (2-6 hours)
- Area meetings in October (1 day)
- WACD convention in November (3 days)
- Committee & special meetings
- Community contact
- Preparation time
- Continuing education (6 hours/year)

## ➤ **Responsibilities and Obligations**

Conservation district supervisors, as elected or appointed officials of a local government, have an obligation to uphold the law and fulfill the public trust, **using taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible**. Volunteer status does not make district supervisor obligations any different than those for other elected officials like county commissioners.

Many responsibilities and requirements of district supervisors in how they conduct district business are outlined in the Conservation Districts Law (RCW 89.08). However, the concept of the public trust is broader. It encompasses the public's expectation of a responsive, just, and equitable district government accountable to its citizenry. Providing such a government is your primary challenge as a district supervisor.

The attached *Checklist* describes steps you ought take to fulfill your district's mission, your responsibilities under the Conservation Districts Law, and your general obligations to the public. The citizens of your district will hold you accountable to the standards outlined in the *Checklist*.

# CHECKLIST: What it means to be a District Supervisor

## *Two major responsibilities...*

### **1. Envision a complete program to conserve the renewable natural resources in your conservation district**

- ✓ Communicate with the citizens in your district, cooperating public and private agencies, local governments, stakeholders, and other partners to:
  - Identify critical resource conservation needs in your district
  - Seek feedback about your district's conservation program
- ✓ Develop a long range plan and annual work plans for your district based on critical needs and constituent feedback
- ✓ Provide technical, financial, and educational assistance to resource users in your district to address priority conservation needs

### **2. Hold everyone involved in your conservation program accountable for its success**

- ✓ Uphold all applicable federal, state, and local laws, Conservation Commission policies and procedures, and your district's own policies and procedures. Give a special focus to:
  - Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity
  - Open Public Meetings
  - Employment/Personnel Management
  - Public Records Disclosure
  - Municipal Ethics
  - Whistleblower Rights
- ✓ Oversee your district's finances, record keeping, & cooperative agreements
- ✓ Supervise your staff and provide for adequate training